

VZCZCXRO6307

PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDBU RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA  
RUEHLN RUEHLZ RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHPS #0091/01 0331225  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 021225Z FEB 07  
FM USOFFICE PRISTINA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6988  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1011  
RHFMIUU/AFSOUTH NAPLES IT  
RHMFIUU/CDR TF FALCON  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEPGEA/CDR650THMIGP SHAPE BE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC  
RUFOANA/USNIC PRISTINA SR

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PRISTINA 000091

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR DRL, INL, EUR/SCE  
NSC FOR BRAUN  
USUN FOR DREW SCHUFLETOWSKI  
EUR/ACE FOR DMAYHEW

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KCRM](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [YI](#) [UNMIK](#) [EAID](#) [PHUM](#)

SOCI

SUBJECT: KOSOVO: COM INAUGURATE AID PROJECT, URGES KOSOVO  
SERBS TO LISTEN TO AHTISAARI'S PROPOSALS

REF: A. 06 PRISTINA 687

[B](#). 06 PRISTINA 518

[C](#). 06 PRISTINA 1071

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED, PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

[1](#). (SBU) SUMMARY. During the inauguration of a U.S.-funded town hall and road rehabilitation project in northern Kosovo on February 1, COM urged Kosovo Serbs to listen carefully to Ahtisaari's proposal, saying that it will contain significant rights and guarantees for Kosovo's Serbs. In a private meeting afterwards, COM urged the mayor of Zubin Potok to keep lines of communications with the international community open. Mayor Ristic asserted that although Kosovo Serbs will not accept independence, they will not resort to violence.  
END SUMMARY.

[2](#). (SBU) On February 1, COM traveled to the northern Serb-majority municipality of Zubin Potok to inaugurate a USAID-funded project that included major structural renovations to the severely dilapidated town hall and improvements to the central traffic interchange. The USD 178,000 project, implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) through its Community Enhancement and Development Program, is part of the USD one million pledged in late 2006 for quick, high impact infrastructure projects in northern Kosovo, to be implemented in advance of Kosovo's status resolution (Ref A). The town hall rehabilitation included a new roof and heating system, as well as new windows, flooring and bathrooms. In the town center, IOM contractors built new sidewalks, installed a drainage system and streetlights, and reorganized traffic flow and parking to reduce congestion and increase security for drivers and pedestrians.

[3](#). (SBU) During a ceremony at the new town hall celebrating the completion of both projects, Zubin Potok Mayor Slavisa Ristic praised the U.S. government for making these and other investments, including the recent rehabilitation of a local

elementary school, in his municipality. He mentioned that the town hall is the traditional venue for social, educational, political and festive gatherings, and said that two weddings have already taken place in the newly renovated facility. Rade Utvic, President of the Agricultural Cooperative, mentioned the building's historical significance to the community, saying that it was the venue in which Zubin Potok municipality was disbanded in 1973 and then re-instated in 1986. Approximately 40-50 people attended the event, including local dignitaries, citizens and students, as well as representatives of international liaison offices, NGOs and KFOR.

¶4. (SBU) In her remarks, COM said that these projects exemplify the U.S. commitment to, "help all people of Kosovo...enjoy a better life." She promised that the U.S. will continue to fund more such projects in Serb-majority areas throughout Kosovo. Referring to Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari's imminent arrival in Kosovo, COM said that the U.S. believes that his proposals will contain very significant rights and guarantees for the Serb community in Kosovo, and added that, "we will support such efforts both politically and with further concrete assistance." Following the speeches, local Serb teenagers performed traditional dances.

¶5. (SBU) Afterwards, during a brief private meeting, COM urged Ristic to listen to Ahtisaari's proposals carefully, and keep lines of communication open. Specifically referencing the decisions of the northern municipalities to cut ties with Pristina's Provisional Institutions of Self Government in June 2006 (Ref B), Ristic said that they have no intention to cease cooperation with the international community. Ristic agreed that the coming days will be difficult, but expressed his hope that differences can be

PRISTINA 00000091 002 OF 002

resolved through dialogue and not violence. He assured COM that although Kosovo Serbs will never accept independence, he said they will not resort to violence. However, he expressed concerns about possible reactions from the Kosovo Albanian side. COM urged Ristic to maintain a sense of calm in his municipality and to engage productively with international representatives as the process moves forward.

¶6. (SBU) In a subsequent interview with Radio Kontakt Plus, COM again emphasized that the Ahtisaari package will benefit all of Kosovo's citizens, including strong guarantees for Kosovo's Serbs. She urged all Kosovo Serbs to listen carefully to Ahtisaari's proposals.

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT. The million dollars we pledged towards infrastructure projects is quickly bearing fruit in the north. This is the second such project inauguration in recent weeks (Ref C), and we expect more to come. These high-visibility projects have had an immediate impact and improved the quality of life for local communities. Inauguration events allow us to ensure that citizens know where the assistance has come from, and thereby prevent the rampant misinformation which usually credits Belgrade for any and all investments. These upbeat, positive events also give us a platform to deliver crucial messages to a critical but skeptical audience. We plan further outreach in the coming days and weeks, to remind to Kosovo Serbs to read the package for themselves and not rely on misinformation from Belgrade and their own self-designated "leaders."

¶8. (U) Post clears this message in its entirety for release to Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari.  
KAIDANOW